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15 January 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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C O N T E N T S



25X1

3. Rhodesia: Economic sanctions increasingly felt.
(Page 4)
4. Communist China: Top two party leaders out of
public view for months. (Page 5)
5. Notes: India;  France; 
Nigeria. (Page 6)

25X1

25X1

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Next 3 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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Rhodesia: [Economic sanctions are being increasingly felt in Rhodesia, but the Smith regime apparently still has the support of the great majority of whites.]

[The American Consul in Salisbury has reported that unemployment among Africans increased by almost 10,000 in the past month. Unemployment figures for Europeans are unavailable, but the consul estimates that 2,000 to 3,000 whites are underemployed because of shortened work weeks and reduced wages, and that most of these workers will lose their jobs within the next few weeks. The Rhodesian Government's efforts to circumvent the oil sanctions will be complicated if Umtali refinery owners stop operations by 21 January, as they reportedly intend.]

[On the other side of the coin, the unemployment figures are neither unexpected nor exceptionally large in terms of the total number of workers. Serious African unemployment, if it occurs, will probably be felt initially among Zambian and Malawian migrant laborers. In any case the government should be able to cope with a level of unemployment higher than the figure reported.]

[Unemployment has not sparked any substantial political dissidence among the Africans. There are also no strong indications that the economic problems resulting from independence have yet generated any disillusionment among Europeans except for a number of business, educational, and religious leaders whose influence on the Smith government is still limited. Most whites apparently are still incensed over the extent of the economic sanctions imposed by Prime Minister Wilson, from whom they expect no solution of the Rhodesian problem short of quick rule by the African majority.]

[The Smith government, itself, has apparently made no overtures for negotiation with Britain which go beyond the unacceptable terms it presented prior to declaring its independence.]

Communist China: China's top two party leaders have been out of public view for nearly two months.

Mao Tse-tung's last public appearance was on 26 November and Liu Shao-chi's on 21 November. Other top leaders, however, including Premier Chou En-lai, party secretary Teng Hsiao-ping, and Peking Mayor Peng Chen, have continued their usual public activities.

Mao Tse-tung customarily retreats to a villa in east or central China during winter and spring. Last spring he was out of sight for two months. Liu's absence is more unusual, however. As chief of state, he is expected to make frequent ceremonial appearances and to receive foreign diplomats and many visitors. Liu is rarely out of the public eye for more than two weeks at a time, and then usually in the summer. His current absence is the longest since 1957.

The protracted withdrawal of Mao and Liu does not necessarily mean that they are seriously ill. They may well be on vacation, resting after a strenuous round of activities last fall.

Mao, now 72, and Liu, 67, have obviously been slowing down. Both are reported to have had serious illnesses in the past, but they appeared to be in relatively good health during their numerous appearances last fall.

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15 Jan 66

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NOTES

India: [A strong consensus is developing behind Congress Party President Kamaraj as the new prime minister, according to Indian President Radhakrishnan. Defense Minister Chavan and former finance minister Desai are said to remain strong contenders. Congress Party parliamentary members are scheduled to make the formal selection at a meeting on 19 January, but this large group may merely ratify the decision reached by key party leaders.]

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France: [Foreign Minister Couve de Murville has told Ambassador Bohlen that he expects De Gaulle's Moscow trip to begin in early June. Describing the visit as a follow-up to his own Russian trip last October, Couve said it did not signify a new direction in Paris' policy toward Moscow. In the same conversation, Couve stated that France still wants changes in NATO and will be ready to talk this spring, probably the latter part of March. He made clear that Paris still wished to begin the NATO discussion with a bilateral exchange with the US.]

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*Nigeria: The reported assassination by army elements on 15 January of Northern Region Premier Ahmadu Bello removes from the political scene the most powerful single individual in Nigeria. In addition to having been the kingpin of the North's semifeudal sociopolitical system, Bello was the top leader of the political party which controls the federal machinery. His death and the reported army takeover in the North could trigger widespread intertribal violence and possibly lead to an early breakup of the federation.

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